DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 425 479 CS 509 937

AUTHOR Rolls, Judith A.
TITLE Changing Hats: Juggling the Demands of Academe and Consulting/Training.
PUB DATE 1998-11-00
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Communication Association (84th, New York, NY, November 20-24, 1998).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College Faculty; *Communication (Thought Transfer); *Consultants; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Training
IDENTIFIERS Academic Community; Consultant Role; Faculty Attitudes; Practitioners

ABSTRACT

After noting that consulting opportunities abound for communication faculty interested in pursuing the charge, this paper aims to provide strategies and tips to help scholar-practitioners and "would-be" consultants balance the demands of academe and consulting/training. The paper is based on a review of literature, on a personal experience of 20 years as a consultant, and on the recommendations and information provided by many scholars. To achieve a balance between academe and communication consulting, several constituents must be satisfied: the university/department; the students; the research program; the clients, the individual scholar-practitioner and his/her family. Recommendations pertaining to each constituent are furnished in the paper. The goal of the paper is to help scholar-practitioners lead balanced lives, and actions recommended are: (1) refuse to sit on committees requiring large time commitments; (2) combine research, teaching, and consulting themes; (3) engage in applied research; (4) get a research assistant; (5) invite students to participate in the consulting process; (6) organize consulting materials and learn to develop multimedia presentations; (7) set aside regular times for exercise, relaxation, and communication with family and friends; and (8) pace consulting so that it does not conflict with other commitments. (Contains 17 references.) (NKA)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 425 479

CHANGING HATS: JUGGLING THE DEMANDS OF ACADEME AND CONSULTING/TRAINING

Judith A. Rolls, Ph.D.
Department of Communication
University College of Cape Breton
Sydney, N.S., CANADA B1P 6L2
902-563-1245 (Office) 902-539-7406 (Fax)
jrolls@uccb.ns.ca

CS 509 937

Paper presented at the Eighty-fourth annual convention of the National Communication Association. New York City, November 20 - 24, 1998.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Rolls

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

CHANGING HATS: JUGGLING THE DEMANDS OF ACADEME AND CONSULTING/TRAINING

Judith A. Rolls, Ph.D.

Consulting opportunities abound for communication faculty interested in pursuing the charge. In fact, consulting can be big business and provide big bucks for university professors who cry poor. Miller (1992) argues strongly that, "That's the only reason they do it, of course, for the money. An altruistic consultant is oxymoronic" (p. 220). He claims that consultants will do anything for the money, even if it has nothing to do with their training or expertise. Certainly, reading the literature and listening to papers at the NCA conferences reveal that consultants in general are regarded as "funny talking," unknowledgeable charlatans. And, academics who consult are demeaned by their "rigorously published" colleagues who do "real" research, as opposed to applied. Goldberg (1983) argues that paid consulting is contrary to the best interests of academia. According to some, then, communication consultants are little more than flashy, flamboyant speakers who miss classes, do questionable research, and pander to the whims of whoever hires them.

I agree. Many take advantage of both university and organizational systems for economic and egotistical remuneration. However, individuals who do not consult merely for the money or the "brags" do exist, and this work is intended for that audience - for professors, or scholar-practitioners (Jarboe, 1992), who consult part-time, who are astute teacher/department members, and who maintain an active research program and publication record. According to Greiner and Metzger (1983), university faculty members who consult part-time throughout their careers

(coupled with senior partners in consulting firms) make up about 10% of consultants. The goal of this paper is to provide strategies and tips to help scholar-practitioners and would-be consultants balance the demands of academe and consulting/training. Regardless of a communication consultant's specific project goal, the function of communication consulting is to enact change (Block, 1981; DeWine, 1994; Goldhaber, 1993; Rudolph & Johnson, 1983). Schein (1988) describes three consulting models: the *Purchase of Expertise Model* (the most prevalent form of consultation), the *Doctor-Patient Model*, and the *Process Consultation Model*. Among other things, the type of consulting engaged in influences the time and effort required by the consultant. One thing is certain, however, projects always take longer than expected, especially when they are first-time assignments.

This work is based on a review of literature, on my own 20-year experience as a consultant (although I did not label myself as such), and on the recommendations and information provided by John Waite Bowers, Sue DeWine, Terilyn Goins, John Keltner, Janet MacLennan, Edward Pappas, Celeste Sulliman, Howard J. Sypher, Debra Worthington, and several individuals who wished to remain anonymous. The information garnered and the counsel contained within pertain largely to time management. As Jarboe (1992) writes, "Whatever the nature of our employer's demands, serious academics struggle with their consciences as they choose how to manage their time. Putting consulting into this mix adds a third demand that must be juggled (...), often to the detriment of all three activities" (p. 226). But for those who want it all, they have to do it all, and that means prioritizing personal and professional lives. The strategies outlined in this paper are designed to aid in this process.

An examination of the literature, my own consulting experience, and the input of several

scholar-practitioners suggest that to achieve a balance between academe and communication consulting, several constituents must be satisfied: your university/department, your students, your research program, your clients, yourself and your family. In the following sections, recommendations pertaining to each constituent are outlined.

RECOMMENDATIONS

University/Department

To achieve a balance between consulting and the non-teaching requirements of the university, review policies that regulate if and how much time is permitted for work off campus. For instance, the University of Colorado has a policy called "the one-ninth rule." It states that faculty may only spend one-ninth on their time assuming consulting responsibilities, and it limits the number of successive workdays that can be spent earning other monies. At the University of Ohio, faculty members may earn no more that 20% of their income from external sources. For some individuals, forfeiting pay earned while consulting may be a viable option, especially when external projects are particularly profitable. Further, many universities, such as the University of Kansas, have "conflict of interest" guidelines which should be closely examined. Once consultants are cognizant of their university's regulations, they can work within the constraints.

To realize this goal, schedule consulting during breaks, summer, or on non-teaching days. Many scholar-practitioners present evening or weekend sessions and some try to arrange their schedules so as to have a Monday or Friday, or both, free. The latter is ideal in that it provides a good slot of time that can be devoted to research, writing, administrative duties, consulting,

or whatever circumstance requires attention.

Scholar-practitioners not only work within university guidelines, they also contribute to their department and university in the form of committee work. Kuehn (1994) emphasizes the notion that new assistant professors seem to attract projects and, feeling honoured, they accept. However, it is crucial to be selective in the amount and type of service provided. As Kuehn (1994) shows:

> If I had to do it over I would have spent more time considering how I was dividing my time. I believed I could do many things and began to feel I was indispensable for some. But the rewards from departmental and university service have not been as satisfying as I had hoped (although they may have been for another person). Today, I have a better idea about how much time membership on a university committee can take and what type of effort I feel is realistic to invest.
>
> (Kuehn, 1994, p. 54)

While Kuehn's assertions are not aimed toward consulting per se, they are germane. If possible, serve on committees that peak interest and/or commitment. Time and energy can also be conserved by avoiding the petty politics that are so prevalent in organizations.

What happens when several obligations and commitments overlap? Even with the best planning and scheduling, times will arise when, for instance, a chair requires something immediately, galleys need to be reviewed and returned within forty-eight hours, an NCA paper has to be completed, a client makes a special request for materials, time, or information, and students are calling you at home. Remain calm, prioritize, and focus on one issue at a time. Expect to work longer and harder in the scholar-practitioner role. An anonymous consultant informed me that no matter what the chair requests, he provides it - he puts his institutional work first. He keeps a low profile on his consulting practice and disclosed that he works all the

time. He creates innovative, stimulating lectures for his introductory courses while he showers, and works late nights to meet the responsibilities he has assumed.

Several scholar-practitioners also pointed out that consulting can actually be advantageous to universities. For instance, it brings the institution's name and expertise to community members who may then be more inclined to recognize the university's role and value. Many adult students enter university as a result of experiences in communication training sessions. Consulting also provides opportunities to network with individuals who may later associate and liaise with the university in a variety of ways. Too, the university can benefit financially from its consultants. For example, a well-known consultant never takes money for work she does on campus, although she may request a donation to her particular school. A less obvious pecuniary advantage for universities is that consulting helps to raise faculty members' financial status, thus reducing pressure on the administration to provide higher salaries.

To balance consulting and dedication to the university, scholar-practitioners should familiarize themselves with university restrictions regarding consulting time or monies that may be earned externally. Work within that framework, and carefully choose committee and departmental work. While university administrations declare that service counts toward promotion and tenure, publications carry more weight. Be prepared to work extremely hard to achieve both academic and consulting goals.

Students

Students make up another constituent body that must be satisfied in order to balance the demands of academe and consulting. If consulting assignments are accepted throughout the

semester, issues such as scheduling, course content, teaching, and the use of students in the consultation process merit consideration.

Scholar-practitioners all recommend pacing consulting activities so that they do not conflict with major teaching requirements like grading research papers, making up exams, and the like. This reduces guilt and prevents feeling overwhelmed. Try not to slate paper due dates before a major consulting job. Rather than have papers go unmarked, why not give students extra time? To increase availability to students, encourage them to use voice-mail and e-mail, and check regularly for messages requiring immediate attention. If off campus consulting dates are known in advance, professors can build into syllabi exercises that require outside work on such days. These might include small group work interactions, library searches, research interviews, et cetera. However, such ventures should have real merit and value for students.

Regarding classroom work, never allow the consulting to push the teaching aside. This can be achieved by letting clients know that teaching duties are a priority and by attempting to teach and consult within the same content areas. Then theoretical perspectives can be tested in real life contexts, and consulting experiences and narratives can be used as classrooms examples. Further, materials and information can be used interchangeably in both contexts. For example, pedagogical aids used in public speaking classes can be adapted easily for use in public speaking workshops. At the same time, conducting professional speaking seminars can yield details about the concrete experiences faced by individuals in the workplace. Bringing such knowledge badk to the classroom helps to convey the major role that public speaking plays in meeting requirements for career goals and advancement.

Regarding actual pedagogical style, try to keep enthusiastic in the classroom. Incorporate

adult education and training strategies into class work by using experiential learning exercises as opposed to straight lecturing, not telling students what they already know, employing the socratic method, using a collaborative learning strategy, and facilitating student-centred as opposed to professor-centred classes (Rolls, 1997). Such strategies keep both students and professors keen and motivated, and provide an opportunity to experiment with potential consulting exercises.

Finally, many scholar-practitioners have students participate in the consulting process, thus providing them with practical experience. One person conveyed that she had students help with preparation and delivery, for which they were given a small stipend, along with their experiential learning. Her undergraduate students did things like copy materials, make telephone calls, video tape sessions, and so forth. I recently invited two students to participant in a training video that was being produced. Given that students often wonder what they can do with a communication degree, introducing them to consulting provides another teaching option. Further, with today's organizational emphasis on training and development, graduates with training experience might be more attractive to potential employers. On the other hand, convey to students that, at present, they lack the knowledge and expertise required to be a good consultant.

To maintain a balance between commitment to students and to consulting, focus on scheduling, on converging consulting and course content, on creating interactive classrooms, and on exposing students to the communication consulting process. In this way, everyone stands to benefit.

Research

Clearly, research is important to scholar-practitioners and they advise that consulting and research projects be combined, otherwise something will have to give. This would be less likely to occur if teaching, research, and application were not viewed as three independent activities. Jarboe (1992) argues that, "By integrating these activities into one role, the scholar-practitioner, we can define new norms for success that will enable us to increase our personal satisfaction; furthermore, such reframing of our professional identity could contribute significantly to our discipline" (p. 226). Doing applied research can make a difference in the field. Kreps, Frey and O'Hair (1991) argue that applied research helps people solve problems, "provides a real world test of the predictive validity of communication theory" (p. 83), and it helps to demonstrate the "clear, pragmatic view of the communication discipline" (p. 84). In fact, Numbers 1 and 2 of Volume 19 of the *Journal of Applied Communication Research* (1991) are devoted to issues in applied research. Eadie (1991), the editor, wrote that:

> ... a common theme running through the essays was the relationship between research and application, mainly through consulting. After some thought I realized that I should not have been so surprised, as consulting is a principal way by which research results are disseminated to "real" people in "real" situations and is also the principal way by which researchers collect their data. (p. v)

On a more practical note, general efficiency can be increased by setting aside at least one day a week for research, using short waiting periods to edit portions of written work, and adhering to the three-day manuscript rule. This canon holds that manuscripts coming into a scholar-practitioner's contact should be attended to within three days, regardless of return due dates. Such a practice allows the momentum of the initial response to be maintained.

Regardless of whether professors are members of editorial review boards, routinely forward work to scholarly journals, or serve on conference selection committees, they typically complete the work within a few days of the due date. Recognize too the cyclical nature of professional associations and refrain from accepting consulting work that interferes with journal and conference submission dates. Acquiring the help of a research assistant also contributes to the amount of research that can be accomplished.

To maintain an active research program while engaging in consulting, it is wise to combine them both in the form of applied communication research. Make time to apply for research funding, and watch that consulting does not interfere with academic deadlines.

Clients

Because successful, ethical consultants provide the services and materials that are contracted for, part-time consultants must recognize and acknowledge when they can and cannot supply the goods. Accept work only when time and commitment prevail. One scholar-practitioner "maxes herself out" for good causes, even though there is little monetary reward. She turns down lucrative jobs if her heart is not in it - a good policy.

Working to capacity within the academy and serving the needs of clients requires exceptional organizational skills. Having a workplace dedicated to the part-time business helps. Maintain cross files of exercises/games, handouts, overheads, proposals, letters, and invoices. Update, adapt, and develop new andragogical strategies regularly. It is always useful to have prepared materials on hand. If feasible, hire someone for secretarial assistance. Schulz (1993) purports that time management can be improved by matching energy level with task level, and scheduling

meetings for either early in the morning, or late in the day. That way you preserve blocks of time for your own work.

A familiarity with technology also adds to time management. Knowing the ins and outs of e-mail, word processing, and multimedia programs enable scholar-practitioners to make wise use of their time. Because trainees expect to be exposed to professional, multimedia presentations, Williams (1997) encourages consultants to demonstrate a proficiency in these areas. The services of multimedia students could be utilized. Further, have regularly used flip chart materials professionally printed and laminated. They look good and eliminate the time-consuming act of making clean, new pages every time a particular concept is used.

Although scholar-practitioners consult only part-time, they need to give clients full time attention. Being available, delivering what is promised, and developing positive, respectful relationships helps in this endeavour, and goes a long way toward getting call backs. To do this and meet academic obligations, it pays to be highly organized. Have materials readily available, have a dedicated work space, and make use of technology.

Self and Family

It is critical to maintain a healthy personal and familial life. Ambitious individuals often put their work before themselves and their family. To develop some kind of equilibrium between time devoted to work and time devoted to physical and emotional health, as well as to the maintenance of relationships, recognize the impossibility of being a full time teacher, a full time scholar, and a full time consultant. If people wish to add part-time work to already full schedules, Cook (1996) recommends deciding what activities can be done without, especially

those undertakings that demand large chunks of time. Examine too how priorities are set. Perhaps late-night TV watching may be swapped for proposal writing, grading, data analysis, or whatever. Cook (1996) also advises that individuals try to become project focused (zeroing in on one thing at a time), and to take short breaks during the day. A scholar-practitioner, the mother of three small children, discerns between attending to the immediate and the urgent. She refers to the *immediate* as the tasks associated with work or home life, such as teaching so many hours per week, grading papers, or picking up groceries. The *urgent* refers to unexpected tasks and situations that call for attention, like the photocopy machine breaking down just as tests are being run off for class which meets in fifteen minutes. She suggests avoiding the *urgent* by becoming good time managers and not waiting until the last minute to do things. This also ensures peace of mind.

Working long hours, meeting deadlines, and interacting with colleagues, students, and clients can be stressful. Manage stress by structuring time for exercise. Select activities like swimming, walking, skiing, running, and skating that can involve the whole family. Set aside time for personal and interpersonal relationships. Further, take vacations regularly and **DO NOT** bring along grading, research/editorial work, or consulting chores. Proper relaxation energises, rejuvenates, and increases efficiency thereby helping scholar-practitioners to work faster and better. If relaxation time is unavailable, listen to relaxation tapes and get enough sleep. Scholar-practitioners know what to do, they just need reminders. Cook (1996) summarizes:

> The key to balancing two jobs and a private life is to eliminate stress, exercise, eat well, have some fun, and get as much relaxed healthy sleep as you can. Sound impossible? It all depends on how serious and committed you are to starting a consulting

practice on the side and being successful at it."
(Cook, 1996, p.43)

CONCLUSIONS

Most scholar-practitioners are ambitious, hard working individuals who are well aware of the inherent demands within the role. While they most likely know how to balance the requirements of academe and consulting, they also get lopsided once in a while. Hopefully the ideas contained in this paper will help me and other scholar-practitioners live balanced lives. The following actions should assist in meeting this goal: (1) Refuse to sit on committees requiring large commitments of time; (2) Combine research, teaching, and consulting themes; (3) Engage in applied research; (4) Get a research assistant; (5) Invite students to participant in the consulting process; (6) Organize consulting materials and learn to develop and make multimedia presentations; (7) Set aside regular times for exercise, relaxation, and communication with family and friends; (8) Pace consulting so that it does not conflict with research, teaching, and family commitments.

REFERENCES

Block, P. (1981). *Flawless consulting: A guide to getting your expertise used*. Texas: Learning Concepts.

Cook, M. (1996). *Consulting on the side: How to start a part-time consulting business*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

DeWine, S. (1994). *The consultant's craft: Improving organizational communication*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Eadie, W. F. (1991). The agenda for applied communication research. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 19(1,2).*

Eadie, W. F. (1991). Editor's Introduction. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 19*, v - vi.

Goldberg, A. (1983). Resolved that paid consulting is contrary to the best interests of academia: The affirmative, the negative. *Journal of the Association for Communication Administration, 44*, 14-16.

Goldhaber, G. M. (1993). *Organizational communication* (6th ed.). Wisconsin: WCB Brown & Benchmark.

Greiner, L. E., & Metzger, R. O. (1983). *Consulting to management*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Jarboe, S. (1992). They do it for the money?: A response to G. M. Phillips. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 20,* 225-233.

Kreps, G., Frey, L. R., & O'Hair, D. (1991). Applied communication research: Scholarship that can make a difference. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 19*, 71-87.

Kuehn, S. A. (1994). Response to chapter two. In G. M. Phillips, D. S. Gouran, S. A. Kuehn, and J. T. Wood (Eds.), *Survival in the academy: A guide for beginning academics*. New Jersey: Hampton Press, Inc., and Virginia: Speech Communication Association.

Phillips, G.M. (1992). They do it for the money. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 20, 219-224.*

Rolls, J. A. (1997, November). *Making the teacher/trainer transition: Strategies that enhance facilitator effectiveness*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Communication Association, Chicago, Illinois.

Rudolph, E. E. & Johnson, B. R. (1983). *Communication consulting: Another teaching option*. Illinois: Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills (ERIC) and Virginia: Speech Communication Association (SCA).

Schein, E. H. (1988). *Process consultation Volume I: Its role in organization development* (2nd ed.). Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Schulz, R. (1993). Time management hints. In R. T. Golembiewski (Ed.), *Handbook of organizational consultation*. New York: Marcel Dekker, Inc.

Williams, C. (1997, November). Pricing to land the contract. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Communication Association, Chicago, Illinois.